

## BRITAIN RETURNS TO THE DARK AGES

## HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 5, 2008*

Mr. POE. Madam Speaker, in the Dark Ages, King Henry VIII left the Catholic church because it would not permit his multiple marriages. Well, Britain is heading back to the Dark Ages. The more wives a British male has, the more benefits he will receive under welfare. This new policy will really only benefit Muslim extremist men, who keep a harem of 4 wives.

The Archbishop of Canterbury suggested that Britain appease Muslim extremists so that they would not have to choose loyalty between Islam and Britain. Tell this to the British soldiers, who are fighting Muslim extremists in Iraq, while their own government rewards Muslim extremists at home. It seems that the real extremists are Britain's own leaders, who have gone too far in the name of political correctness.

Religious law cannot overrule the law of the land. We cannot make exceptions to appease an individual group.

The great Winston Churchill once said, "Never give in, never . . . never give in except to convictions of honor and good sense." I'm sure Winston Churchill is turning in his grave.

And that's just the way it is.

## BIPARTISAN CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION TO NATO PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY MEETINGS AND SOUTHEASTERN EUROPE

## HON. JOHN S. TANNER

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 5, 2008*

Mr. TANNER. Madam Speaker, I recently led a bipartisan House delegation to NATO Parliamentary Assembly meetings in Brussels and Paris, and to additional meetings in Croatia, the Republic of Macedonia (or Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, FYROM), and Albania from February 16–24. The co-chair of my delegation was the Honorable JO ANN EMERSON. In addition, Representatives CAROLYN MCCARTHY, ELLEN TAUSCHER, DENNIS MOORE, JEFF MILLER, MIKE ROSS, and BEN CHANDLER, and staff, worked to make this a highly successful trip in which we examined current NATO issues, above all the coming decision at the NATO summit in Bucharest on possible enlargement of the alliance.

The NATO Parliamentary Assembly (NPA) consists of members of parliament from the 26 NATO states, as well as members of parliament from associated states such as Russia, Georgia, Ukraine, Croatia, Albania, and Macedonia. During NPA meetings delegates discuss and debate a range of issues of current importance to the alliance. At the February meetings, three issues dominated the discussions: enlargement of the alliance, Afghanistan, and developments in Kosovo. Delegates have the opportunity to listen to presentations by specialists from NATO and on NATO affairs, and to engage in discussion of

the issues raised. An additional element of the meetings is the opportunity to meet and come to know members of parliaments who play important foreign-policy roles in their own countries. Some of these acquaintances can last the duration of a career, and are invaluable for gaining insight into the developments of allied states.

Enlargement is one of the key issues before the alliance today. NATO will hold a summit in Bucharest April 2–4. Croatia, Albania, and Macedonia are candidate states, and each must receive unanimous support from all 26 allied governments in order for it to receive an invitation to join. From that point, each member state will follow its own constitutional processes to amend NATO's founding Washington Treaty to admit new states and to make a commitment to defend additional territory. There must again be unanimous support in this process for a candidate if it is to be admitted to membership. The alliance is still at an early stage, therefore, in considering the applications for membership of these three countries. Congress will hold hearings on the qualifications of the three states, and the United States and other allies will expect them to continue to work to meet NATO requirements under their Membership Action Plans (MAPs).

Our delegation also held discussions over NATO's effort to stabilize Afghanistan. It is clear, as Secretary of Defense Gates himself reportedly noted on February 8, that U.S. involvement in Iraq has damaged the effort to persuade allies to send forces to Afghanistan. European public criticism of the Iraq conflict has made more difficult our allies' task of persuading parliaments to contribute more troops to Afghanistan. The United States now contributes approximately 15,000 troops to NATO's International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), and will soon send 3,200 additional Marines to compensate for shortfalls in allied forces in the fight against a resurgent Taliban. This is a highly important mission in the effort to stem the growth of fanaticism and barbarism that remains a threat to civilized peoples everywhere. Each of us in the delegation made an effort to persuade our counterparts from the NATO parliaments to support ISAF and to contribute the forces necessary to stabilize Afghanistan.

Kosovo declared independence on February 17. Our delegation arrived for meetings in Brussels the day before, and reaction in southeastern Europe to the decision to place Kosovo under the EU's "supervised independence" was a principal topic of discussion. The United States and most allies quickly followed with recognition of Kosovo's new status and urged its continued development as a democratic, multi-ethnic state. NATO's Kosovo Force (KFOR), of whom approximately 1,500 are U.S. soldiers, continues to provide security and is an important factor for stabilization in the current tension between Kosovo Albanians and the Serb minority in the north of the country. With the assistance of our embassies, the delegation closely followed developments in Kosovo throughout the trip.

While in Brussels, we met first with Ambassador Nuland, the U.S. permanent representative to NATO. She provided a briefing and responded to our questions on a wide range of issues. There followed two days of meetings of the NPA's Economics and Security, Defense and Security, and Political Committees. The meetings raised such issues as NATO's

political agenda, the effectiveness of the alliance's public diplomacy efforts, and a possible new Strategic Concept, which would lay out NATO's mission and goals for the coming several years.

We also held a private meeting with NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer. Afghanistan and public support for ISAF were important topics of discussion, as was Kosovo. De Hoop Scheffer offered to come to Washington to meet with Members of Congress in the near future, and this is an idea worthy of consideration. There was also a "brainstorming" session at NATO headquarters, attended by Representatives ROSS, MOORE, and MILLER. Representative ROSS made a forceful presentation outlining the importance of the ISAF mission, and of allies making a fair share of the contributions to NATO forces in Afghanistan. The rest of the delegation attended a meeting of the North Atlantic Council, the alliance's governing body, comprised of representatives from the 26 member states. A range of issues—Russia, energy security, Kosovo, and Afghanistan among them—was discussed. We ended the day at NATO headquarters with a meeting with U.S. General Karl Eikenberry, who is the deputy head of NATO's Military Committee; he was also formerly commander of NATO forces in Afghanistan. He briefed the delegation on the effort to defeat the Taliban, and on the complexities of the political situation in Pakistan that is affecting Afghanistan's stability.

The delegation held meetings at the European Commission the following day. As chairman of the NPA's Economics and Security Committee, I presided over some interesting meetings on trade and the international economy. A highlight of the day was an exceptional presentation by the EU's Director General for trade, David O'Sullivan, who gave a lively presentation and concise overview of the principal points of controversy in the Doha round of trade talks, and in broader trade issues.

The delegation then traveled to Paris for meetings at the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). After a brief session with our ambassador to the OECD and his staff, I chaired sessions at the OECD on a number of issues. The global economy, Russia's economic practices and potential, and the value of education in economic development were key subjects of discussion. That evening we met with members of the French-American Foundation, together with our ambassador to France and a number of members of the French parliament who are in the French-American caucus.

The following day the delegation traveled to Zagreb, Croatia, for the beginning of meetings with candidate state governments for membership in the alliance. Serbian reactions to Kosovo's independence and recognition by many governments had set the region on edge. The U.S. embassy in Belgrade, Serbia, was attacked on February 21, as were the Slovenian and Croatian embassies there. U.S. Ambassador to Croatia Robert Bradtke accompanied us during much of our stay in Croatia and kept us up to date on developments in Belgrade and on the safety of U.S. personnel at our embassy there. He also briefed us on Croatia's efforts to qualify for NATO membership.

While in Zagreb, we met with Prime Minister Sanader, President Mesic, and other senior officials. We were interested in discovering the